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*malin esprit barré chemin qu'en moment delivrance
moin apè rivé. Nou' toutes Invisibles, les Saints, les
Morts, Marassa, vini assisté moin jou'-a.*— I ask you all
to come deliver me, that you open the way for me, that
you do not allow evil spirits to bar my path when the
time of the delivery approaches. May you all, Invisible
Beings, the Saints, the Dead, Twins, come to my aid on
that day."

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Should one of the couple be a devotee of Damballa or Er-
zilie, both of them jealous gods, a chicken or two is added to
the customary offerings, and some gift pleasing to the god,
such as a dress or suit of his sacred color, is made him. Nor-

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mally no further precautions need be taken. If, however, the
pregnant woman has had one or two miscarriages, she and her
husband go to a *vodun* priest, preferably a woman, and obtain
a "medicine" to be used in bathing the abdominal and vag-
inal areas as a precaution against *mauvaises aires*, the were-
wolves believed to consume children in the womb. If the preg-
nancy this time terminates successfully, some of the same
medicine is rubbed on the child shortly after birth and several
times during the ensuing weeks, but should the infant later
fall ill, the *vodun* priest brings herbs and makes a smoke-fire
to drive away the werewolves that are believed still to be
hovering about.

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At the onset of labor, if either the father or the mother of
the unborn child is vowed to Damballa, another sacrifice is
made to this god and to the spirits of twins, giving a *couvert*
sec and one or two chickens and pigeons to each. If a *vodun*
priest has determined what deity protects the child, a sacrifice
is also given this spirit, and prayers are said to the spirits of
twins, the dead of the families of both the man and the woman,
and all other supernatural beings, saints of the Church and
vodun gods alike.

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Meanwhile the woman has been placed on the ground on

WHAT IS "VOODOO"?

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a stream, there to remain until, becoming impatient, it demands to be taken out. A ceremony then brings back the tortured soul and makes of it a "*los nan canarie* — a *los* in a jar" — which thereafter acts as a guard for its family.

There is little agreement as to the place of residence of the *los*. In general, it is believed that they come from Guinée each time they are called, returning when they have, in the native idiom, "descended from the heads of their horses" — that is, when the possession of their devotees has ceased. Those "under the water," however, being Haitians, remain in Haiti for seven years until the ceremony just mentioned, of putting them *nan canarie*, has been performed, when they, like the other *los*, return to Guinée. At the same time, all recognize the African character of the *los*, whether they be gods brought from Africa or the Créole *los* from Haiti itself.

Worship of the *los* is directed by priests of the cult. The terms *papaloi* and *mamaloï* as designations for male and female priests, almost universally employed by non-Haitian writers, are practically unknown in Mirebalais, where, as in most regions of Haiti, a priest is called a *hungan*, a priestess a *mambu*.²² Besides the *hungan* (or *mambu*), and the *gangan*, a term applied to a *hungan* of renown, is the *bocor*, a practitioner of magic, not a member of any *vodun* priesthood, but a man who has acquired his power by the purchase of spirits. He is particularly differentiated from the *hungan* and *mambu* by the fact that the *los* of their own accord are believed to have given "*connaissance*" — the knowledge of healing and helping, to these latter.²³ Not all gods can endow their devotees with this *connaissance*. Some of the Rada deities, in addition to those of the Ogun group who give it, are Legba, Damballa, Aizan, Bosu, St. Jean, and Agwe Woyo; among the Pétro gods it is conferred by Bosu Trois Cornes, Simbi d'leau, Gede, Osange, Malt' Gran' Bois, and Malt' Calfou (Carrefour). Simbi en Deux Eaux and Simbi Proméné both give magic power, the former conferring knowledge of excellent protectives against

154 LIFE IN A HAITIAN VALLEY

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werewolves as well as of the ingredients to concoct healing baths. Certain priests worship and control a large number of deities, as is shown by those which comprise the personal pantheon of a *gangan* from the valley of Mirebalais: Gedenibo, Erzilie Gé Rouge; Ti Kita Demembré; Simbi en Deux Eaux; Bumba Trois Îlé; Legba; St. Jacques; Ogun Ferraille, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Ashade; Lemba; Aizan Keleké, Aizan Wedo, Aida Wedo, Damballa Wedo; Baron Samedi, Bosu Trois Cornes; Congo Wangol, Malt' Mapou; Agasu; Agwe, Agweto Woyo; Kadia-Bosu; Sobo Gran'; l'Afrique Guinée. Whatever his ability, the *hungan* can cure only diseases "sent by man" — that is, those caused by magic — and by the *loa*, since against illness sent by God he can do nothing. Gossip [521] disapprovingly whispers how in more than one instance a *hungan* took advantage of his position and the trust of his clients, falsely to represent himself as able to cure an illness "sent by God" through stating it was due to magic.

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An important function of the *hungan* or *mambu* is to foretell the future, and it is as a diviner that the *vodun* priest or priestess is most often employed. No major rite would be considered by a family unless divination were resorted to, but consultation is made for a far wider range of affairs than those of a purely religious nature, and no proposed undertaking of any importance in the secular field is begun without visiting a diviner to discover whether or not the fates are propitious. When divining, the priest is usually under possession by his gods, but other methods, such as gazing into a crystal or basin of water, may also be employed. Several divining séances were visited, but no description of them need be given here, since a number of accounts, including an especially full one by Parsons, are available.²⁰

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Though a certain hierarchy seems to exist among the *vodun* priests in other districts of Haiti, in Mirebalais the organization of the cult is informal to an extreme degree.²¹ In the minds of the cult members, various priests in the same region

WHAT IS "VOODOO"?

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are differentiated according to the types of healing in which they have had the greatest success, and the "miracles" to their credit, such as a *hungan* who had achieved a wide reputation for being able to resuscitate dead children. One *hungan* of the valley is spoken of as having powers which rank him with the greatest in the land, but now that he is old, a nephew of his is being called upon to act in his place. In a relatively short time, say his friendly clients, he will take his place even among great *hungan*s elsewhere.

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Under the *hungan* and *mambu* are assistants called *hunsu*, or sometimes, in the case of men, termed *adjanikon*. In some parts of Haiti, particularly in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac and the southern peninsula, there are degrees of initiation for the *hunsu*, which include the ordeal by fire that makes them *hunsu kanzo*.²⁰ In Mirebalais, however, the *kanzo* rite, though known by name, is neither required nor performed. The *hunsu* and *adjanikon* know the rituals in a general way, hold and wave the banners used to salute the gods, sing the songs for the *loa*, aid in bringing the possessed dancers out of their possessions, and perform such other ritual tasks as helping the officiating *hungan*. Some members of the cult group have special ability to sing large numbers of the ritual songs for any *loa* which may be called, while others perform the animal sacrifices. It is among these male assistants that the most expert drummers are found.

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This, then, constitutes an outline of that system of belief included under the term *vodun*. Once more, in summary, it may be emphasized that *vodun* is neither the practice of black magic, nor the unorganized pathological hysteria it is so often represented to be. The gods are known to their worshippers, and the duties owed them are equally well understood. The reward for the performance of these duties is good health, good harvests, and the goodwill of fellow-men; the punishment for neglect is corresponding ill fortune. On this basis of belief is erected the ceremonial of worship.

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taken to the *pres' anounne* to be blessed with holy water; in the town the Catholic priest is said to do this. In full mourning, black is worn on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, the days sacred to the dead, but since full mourning means that one must be dressed in one's best and it is impossible to wear these clothes all day long even in the first weeks after death, the rule is to remain at home, fully dressed, on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, wearing the full mourning outside the house only to Sunday mass.

When full mourning for a parent cannot be worn immediately following death, the fulfillment of the obligation is postponed. If this duty is not ultimately met, however, the dead take vengeance, so that a child of the one who was remiss perhaps falls ill, or some other misfortune comes to him. If the negligent one is no longer living, then the penalty for his neglect will be assessed on his children, who, on consulting a diviner, will be told that they must wear mourning not only for their own parents, but for their grandparents as well. Such is the case of a dying woman whose story is recounted, for a diviner ascertained that though she had worn mourning for her own father, he had not worn it for his parent; as soon as she put on full mourning for her grandfather, she is said to have immediately recovered.

A widower wears mourning for a legally married wife for a year, and a widow for her husband during a similar period, and it is believed that if a man were to remarry before the year has elapsed, his second wife would die, so that a woman will not go sooner to a widower, while it is equally dangerous for a widow to take a husband before the first anniversary of the death of her spouse. Should a *placée* wife die, however, another may be taken in her stead before the year has passed, for it is only in matters where the Church is concerned that the dead take vengeance. Furthermore, a man who has more than one mate may go to his other wives at any time after the death of a spouse, and though he would, of course, not go to them

CATHOLICISM AND VODUN

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~~the falls, therefore, in association~~
with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saut d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Camions traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls themselves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emotional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eeriness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them vodun and bal, though at these public dances no possessions are countenanced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the penitents, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the loa they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Ezilie and other vodun deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees professed and healed the sick.

68 *Services for the Loa*

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731 to "eat" people; that is, to destroy them. To do this he employs such means as disease, insanity, and destruction of crops. If a man serves Pinga Maza well, the loa protects him in return; but for those who anger him, Pinga is a menacing and vengeful creature. People often say, "Pinga, c'est djab" (Pinga is a devil).

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798 The Pinga hounfor in Port-au-Prince is called the *Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur*. Its peristyle is simple and is hardly distinguishable from those of other small hounfors. Around the base of the center pole is a three-foot-high wall of masonry, decorated with simple cult symbols. The outer room of the hounfor proper also resembles many another. The familiar pot têtes containing loa stand on a wooden altar, and there are Catholic lithographs on the walls. But the inner room belongs exclusively to Pinga Maza. Here are all the accoutrements and objects sacred to the deity. Everything is red. Pinga's clothing and kerchiefs are red. On the walls are painted esoteric designs—hands, skulls, and crosses—all in red. The bottles, magic bundles, and govis on the altar are decorated with red cloth, ribbons, or paint. In the middle of the earthen floor is embedded a heavy wooden cross. On each end of the crossbeam hangs a large calabash resembling a bulbous hand. And on top of the upright is affixed a human skull. The total impression of this hounfor is that of a bizarre aberration, calculated to intimidate and terrify. The houngan himself is relatively young, literate, and city wise. His personality is smooth and sharp, and he lacks the air of sincerity and easy simplicity which most often characterizes the houngan of the mountains.

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755 In this inner room, before the skull and the cross, there took place a small service for a client, to determine what kind of magic was needed to fend off malevolent actions of an enemy. On the day of the divining session, there hung from the rafters of the tonnelle a long rope, which extended into a deep hole in the earth near the door. Hanging on the rope, down inside the hole, were two gray dolls tightly bound together. Hanging still farther down were a knife, a fork, and other, unidentifiable objects. This cluster of magic paraphernalia was an *expédient* at work; it was an elaborate pouin, which was working against an enemy who lived far away.

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755 Before entering the hounfor, the houngan took a long rope whip from the wall and cracked it seven times before the door. This process, known as *frête cache*, was to "wake up" the loa within. The houngan then entered, followed by the client who was seeking help. They paused briefly in the outer room, where the houngan took up his ason and bell and made a small *vèvè* on the ground. He spoke briefly in *langage* and then passed on through the door to the inner room. There the

Services for the Loa 69

houngan took his place before the small altar and the cross surmounted by the skull. Again he spoke *langage* and rattled his asson. He took from the altar a small-necked bottle containing a white alcoholic liquid and a tight-fitting iron cross. The presence of the iron cross inside the bottle was represented as a magical phenomenon. The houngan took a mouthful of the white liquid and sprayed it out in a fine mist over the skull. Twice more he sprayed the mist, in different directions. Then he poured a little of the liquid directly on the skull. The room was filled with the smell of alcohol. The houngan lighted a candle and sat in a low chair facing the altar. He shook his asson rhythmically and spoke *langage* to Pinga Maza. Suddenly Pinga Maza entered the houngan's head. The houngan became violent. He jerked this way and that, making strange noises in his throat. He seized a machete from the altar, waved it around, and struck the flat of it against his head. He continued for a while to beat his head fiercely with the machete. Gradually he became quiet. His assistants placed Pinga's red jacket on him. Now he spoke in the tired voice of an old man. He complained that he was hungry, that he had not eaten for a long while. His assistant handed him a razor blade. He placed it in his mouth, chewed it up, and swallowed it, washing it down with more of the white liquid in the bottle. He asked for more, and they gave him a second blade to eat. He demanded a third, and ate that, too, spitting out small fragments of steel that caught in his teeth.

His assistant told him there was a man present seeking advice about a pouin. The possessed houngan looked around with half-closed eyes. He asked the man his name, and what he wanted. After hearing the client's story, the houngan took out a deck of cards and placed them one at a time, face up, on a winnowing tray. After studying the cards he said: "You are strong, but not strong enough. You already have some protections, but they do not protect you from the dangers coming your way. You have powerful enemies. You must have a new pouin." The man said yes, he wanted a new pouin, but how much would it cost? Pinga replied through the mouth of the houngan: "Twenty-five dollars." The man said: "I will get the money and return." He went out after placing five gourdes on the winnowing tray with the cards. Pinga became drowsy. The houngan's head fell forward on his chest and he slept. The divining session was ended.

THE WATER ROAD

The land where the loa live, the place "below the water," is not thought of as being in the water itself. It is dry and airy, like the countryside of Haiti. But the route to it is through water.

72 *Services for the Loa*

588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
 588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
 184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They
 are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We
 did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to
 talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down
 below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
 276 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
 184 useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in
 these rites is Ezilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes
 identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part
 in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gèlè Nimbo
 or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these
 loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is
 known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Ezilie has special obligations to her for the dura-
 834 tion of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to
 this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even
 though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
 755 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
 793 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or mis-
 796 fortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communica-
 tions with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are
 consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is
 determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not
 be clear, wishes to have nuptial ties with the client. The illnesses or mis-
 fortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the
 person concerned.

753 Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods
 777 to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *gembo*
 (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on
 the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the in-
 formation.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are
 then made. The rites that follow may take place in a hounfor or at the
 house of the human bride or groom. Both a *prêt savane* and a houngan
 officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
 554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

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92 Songs of the Peristyle

violently. The hounsi complain that Mait' Grand Chimin treats them as though they were flour being ground in a mill:

Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fail
Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fail
Papa m'pas mais moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin!
Papa m'pas mais moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin! [Ex. 85]

Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!

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When there is sickness within the société there may be songs for the absent ones. Here is a song for an ailing hounsi:

Moin allé wè là, hounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè ça, hounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè houngan, hounsi malade oh! [Ex. 86]

I am going to see there, the hounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see it, the hounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see, houngan, the hounsi is sick, oh!

Again, the members of the société call upon Ogoun, or St. Jacques, to help one of their number who is sick:

St. Jacques marré chwal li,
Li pas dit personne oh,
Véyé li pou' moin!
Li met gainyain verre,
Li met gainyain maline nan dos,
St. Jacques oh!
Ba li lavie pou' moin! [Ex. 87]

St. Jacques ties his horse,
He tells no one, oh,
Take care of him for me!
He may have worms,
He may have sores on his back,
St. Jacques, oh!
Protect him for me!

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Ogoun is the dispenser of rum, and in virtually all Ogoun rituals rum is at some time or another in evidence. Sometimes rum is poured into a hot iron pot and bursts into flame. The iron pot is described as Ogoun's

In the Mapou Tree 101

Many of his potions are of a mystical and semiritual nature; yet from roots and leaves he brews specific medicines for specific illnesses, such as rheumatism, fevers, malaria, worms, and yaws. Sometimes his cures are effective, sometimes they fail. The leaf doctor is consulted for poisons and their antidotes, though many poisons, such as that in the wari bean, may be gathered and dispensed by anyone. 759
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One of the macabre figures in Haitian folk belief is the *zombie*. In the most general sense, the name designates the bland soul of a person who died without the distinction of having a loa in his head. The soul or spirit has no special will. It cannot affect the living in any way, unlike the lutin, the djablesse, and those who were buried possessed of mystères. It does not harass enemies or importune its descendants. It is an undynamic, simple, otherworldly spirit, a sort of negative afterimage. It does not need to be placated or feared. 775

But the word *zombie* has another, more popular meaning, signifying a human being who has "died" and been resurrected from the graveyard by members of the Zcaubeaup Society, by a wicked sorcerer, or by some other person who has realized the "power" to perform this act. 775
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The Haitian countryside is full of tales about fresh graves that have been robbed of their bodies by practitioners of this special form of black magic. By a secret formula these soulless "dead" are revived and given a semblance of life. They lack only the power of will. Without that, they are at the complete command of the sorcerer who has disinterred them. They are presumed to be spirited away and put to work at drudgery in some remote place. Stories are told of plantations in the mountains whose entire labor force is made up of zombies, the animated dead. You can tell a zombie when you see him. His eyes are dull and glazed, he gives no sign of recognition to people he once knew, he moves slowly and ploddingly at his tasks, and he takes orders only from his master. He neither sings nor dances, and he eats and drinks without interest. His facial expression never changes. He is emotionally and mentally dead. Neither the rites of the Church nor those of Vodoun can help him. There is only one formula for breaking the spell. If he eats salt he will either regain full life or die a merciful death. The master therefore takes great care that his zombies never have salt. [263]

Haitians have many explanations of this mystical phenomenon. Some hold that the sorcerer has the unique power to revive the dead. Others believe that the victim is not really dead but has succumbed to a virulent poison which numbs all the senses and stops bodily functions but does not truly kill. Upon disinterment, the victim is given an antidote which restores most physical processes but leaves the mind in an inert state, without will or the power to resist. [184]

Musical Instruments 197

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum denuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of the hardness of the wood, usually *lignum vitae*. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are commonly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a combined trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of bamboo. It is called a *vaccine* or *bois bourrique*. Both names have interesting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico-medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and

1 [See plate 8, p. 112-F. -- Analyst]

198 *Musical Instruments*

534 the horn itself was filled with the magico-medical preparation, which
 155 was called *vaccine*. The point of the horn was applied to parts of the body which needed treatment, and the powers of the potion were thus transmitted to the affected areas. In time, the cow's horn itself came to be known as a *vaccine*. Eventually the horn used for musical purposes took over the name, which was then transferred to the bamboo trumpet. The other name by which the bamboo trumpet is known, *bois bourrique*, means burro wood. But it probably is a corruption of *voix bourrique*, meaning "donkey's voice," an accurate description of the sound it makes.

534 The vaccine consists of a length of bamboo, with a joint membrane at
 533 one end cut into a mouthpiece. Trumpets of different sizes give different tones, and three to five of them together constitute a vaccine orchestra. Vaccines are employed by the coumbites in the fields, and they are heard in the towns and cities primarily during the pre-Easter festivities. In the Rara festivals the vaccine players march together, blowing and tapping their trumpets with sticks, followed by a crowd of dancers. Traditionally, the bamboo trumpet is not employed in religious music, although in recent years it has made its appearance occasionally in Congo-Guinée rites.

534 There are two kinds of musical scrapers. The one more often seen
 is the *grage*, a piece of sheet metal perforated in the fashion of our common kitchen grater. It is "played" by scraping a piece of wire or a nail across its rough surface. Found in secular rather than religious settings, the *grage* is likely to be used in combination with such instruments as the *tambourine*, marimba, claves, and *basse*. The second form of scraper is the *denté*, or *dentli*, a notched stick played with a bamboo scraping blade. The free end of the stick is sometimes braced against a bench or a plank, which acts as a sounding board. Some Haitians reported that in the old days gourds were used as sounding chambers.
 534 The scraper in one form or another appears to have both Indian and
 171 West African precedents. Its relationship to the washboard as used in Negro folk music in the United States is obvious. The notched gourd
 [171] called the *guiro*, found in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other West Indian islands, appears to be present in Haiti only as an imported instrument.

534 Rattles of various types are used in religious and secular dances, in
 535 the invocation of deities, and as accompaniment for solo singing. The most common of the rattles is the simple cha-cha, or *kwa-kwa*. It is a small gourd with a wooden handle, with seeds inside. It is usually played by the singing leader as a device to keep time. Sometimes the long dry seed pods of the cha-cha tree are used as a substitute.

000 In the Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made

[The Congo and Pétro Pantheons]

Appendix 1: The Pantheons 329

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WANGOL (King of Angola). He also appears in other rites.

YAOMBÉ, or MAYAOMBÉ. This name is a tribal designation, referring to the Mayaombés of the Congo region.

WANGOL DLEAU (Wangol of the Water)

MOUMOUNGUE. Often considered to be a "hard" loa. Ritual service to him includes, on special occasions, the cutting off of dogs' ears and tails. He is fond of dogs and is benevolent toward them. The name derives from that of a tribe of the upper Congo region. [782]

TI MOUMOUNGUE. Said to be a "son" of Moundongue.

MOUMOUNGUE MOUSAILLE. A member of Moundongue's family.

BAIACOU, or BÉLÉCOU. A loa identified with the morning star, also called Baiacou.

There is also a town in Dahomey by this name.

GANDA, or BAGANDA, also called Nèg' Ganda. A deity taking the name of the Ganda people of Uganda.

CONGO YAMINGAN. A benevolent loa associated with curing and protecting the sick. Certain curative medicine bundles are called *yamingans*. [755]

MACAYA BUMBA, sometimes called Caya. He takes his name from the Bumba people of the upper Congo River region. The Bumbas are near neighbors of the Moundongues.

MANYO BUMBA. One of the Bumba family.

MARIANI MOUMOUNGUE. One of the Moundongue family.

ROI LOANGUE (King of Loango). Refers to the old African kingdom of that name.

NANCHOU. A warrior deity.

AVÉLÉKÉTÉ. Known primarily in northern Haiti. [784]

DAN PÉTRO. A rather malevolent loa, from whom the Pétro cult takes its name. The mangé for Dan Pétro is a pig. Early observers speculated that Dan Pétro was originally a powerful houngan of prerevolutionary days.²³ [782]
[773]

AYIDA PÉTRO. A Pétro version of the Vodoun Ayida Wèdo.

BAKULU BAKA, known in some regions by the name Pinga Maza. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats"—i.e., destroys—people. Some informants are inclined to believe that Bakulu and Pinga are separate loa, both of a variety akin to baka or démons.

BAKULU BARAK. Related to Bakulu Baka.

BAMBARRA TAIBA. He is visualized as a sea crab. *Taille bas* in Creole means "low hips" and is used to describe a dance posture. The surname Taiba therefore may describe the movements of this loa as he moves about like a crab. [792]

BOLISI BOLISA

BRISÉ GÉNÉRAL, or GÉNÉRAL BRISÉ. He is enormously large and ferocious in appearance. A special loa of the country people. Although stern, he is fond of children. He is symbolized as an owl; his home is in the chardette tree. His physical description suggests that he may be a deification of the epic folklore character Brise Montaigne, or Break Mountains.

CHANGAMAN

CONGO JÉROUX (Congo Red Eyes). A malevolent male spirit. Loa with red eyes are always of bad character.

CONGO MAPONNE, or MAPONNE. A malevolent spirit.

CONGO SAVANE, or CONGO ZAMBO (Congo of the Plains). Malevolent, fierce, and
²³ [Saint-Mary, *De la danse*, p. 48. Cf. P. 354, cat. 116. —Analyst]

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Worship of the loa is directed by priests and priestesses. They grow into their positions by a kind of tolerant apprenticeship. Young men and women discover their abilities in dealing with loa or their desire to participate actively in serving them; they assist the officiating priests; they listen carefully to the lore of their elders, keeping their eyes open meanwhile. The priest is generally called a houngan, or sometimes a *papaloi*; the priestess a *mambu* or a *mamaloï*.³³ No ceremony marks the progression of a novice through any set stages to final priesthood; rather, the people in the community simply recognize growing expertness. The more effective and capable a houngan, the greater his prestige and the wider his reputation. There is nothing even vaguely resembling the ordered hierarchy of priests in the Catholic Church, nor is there any control of one houngan over another. No holy robes adorn the officiants, although they occasionally wear certain colors or ornaments to please the loa. Most of the Vodun priests and priestesses are simple peasants, working in the fields and going about the daily round of life. When they are called to perform a ritual, an offering is taken up in the early part of the service to recompense them for their offices. [192]

Actually, the Vodun houngan and mambu correspond much more closely to the primitive medicine man or shaman than to the Catholic priest. They are thought to have power, through certain Rada and Pétro loa, to cure illnesses caused either by adverse magic of one's enemies or by a loa; they are not able, however, to cure sickness sent by the Christian God. Likewise they can remedy or avert misfortune whose origin is magic or the loa. One of their highly important functions is foretelling the future: no important service would be contemplated by a family without previous resort to divination to determine the propitiousness of the time, nor would it be sensible to undertake a secular business of importance without preliminary reassurance by this means. To see into the future effectively, the priest must be possessed by the loa.³⁴ 793 755 787

33. The second of these names in each case derives from "papa" and "mama," or master and mistress; and from the familiar loa or god. It is not implied that the officiants dominate the loa but only that they deal expertly with them. [192]

34. In addition to the houngans and mambu, there are also *bocors* who specialize in magic without conducting regular religious rites. These bocors probably deserve the name of sorcerers. [791]

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the struggle for independence, threw themselves against the formidable weapons of the whites. Whenever in spite of the drogue a man was wounded, there was always the explanation of other potent magic, never a surrender of the belief in drogues. Tradition has it that Christophe wore a drogue giving him immunity against all but silver bullets, and that he kept a silver bullet for suicide in case the need should arise—as it did. Drogues were worn by the caco guerrillas, active from 1919 to 1922, who harassed the Marines during the Occupation of the country.

Such forms of magic are found among practically every known folk. There are traces of charms in the folklore of most "civilized" people, as well as in actual, if secret, use by many apparent sophisticates.

The next commonest application of magic has to do with disease. Haiti is a poor and prevailingly illiterate country in which there are not enough trained medical doctors to serve adequately even the small population of the towns. People who live in the secluded valleys and on the mountainsides receive practically no medical attention. The disease rate if accurate figures could be obtained would certainly be shockingly high, with hookworm and malaria all but universal, and yaws, elephantiasis, and tuberculosis common. In the case of disease and its treatment, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant is typically primitive.

Sickness is thought to be caused either as a punishment or a warning by one of the loa, or by evil magic wrought by one's enemies. When a man falls ill, therefore, he sends for the specialist, whether houngan, bocor, or caplata, to discover the responsible loa; next, he must learn whether the loa is angry with him, and if so, for what reason; if it is found that the loa is acting through magical compulsion of an enemy, the treatment of the disease will be different from the case of a loa acting without human compulsion. An angry spirit can be appeased by proper sacrifices; a spirit acting as an agent of evil magic must be fought by another spirit, compelled by the countermagic of the patient's specialist. Sometimes the countermagic is simple exorcism by spells and incantations. At other times it is highly involved and dangerous, requiring exotic plants, continuous attention, even illegal practices such as mutilating a corpse. Casual observation might fail to detect the magical element in some of the operations, for they resemble merely the brews or applications of old wives' tales.

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THE HAITIAN PEOPLE

- 755 Specialists in the magic of healing sometimes hit upon remarkable remedies, just as those who concentrate upon causing ailments learn the most effective ways of poisoning a victim's body or, by suggestion, of ruining his peace of mind. In the soil of infinite belief in spiritual powers the seeds of suspicion take firm root.

754 From the realm of recognized magic in which most natives at one
776 time or another indulge, one crosses the threshold into a world of sorcery, perversion, and evil mystery. Here no normal person walks, for it is perilous ground. Here is no illumination from any loa or saint, but a grisly darkness coming down by tradition through centuries of whispered fear. From European folklore by way of French storytellers the Haitian peasant has taken the idea of the werewolf, whom he conceives always to be feminine. The male counterpart is the demon. These creatures are men and women who have a passion for eating human flesh and drinking human blood; cannibalism being abhorrent to normal persons, these abnormal ones through the blackest of magic are believed to be able to transform themselves into werewolves and demons, in which shape they glut themselves before effecting the change once more into human form. One does well to beware of persons with red eyes or black spots in the corner of the eye: these are the telltale marks of the cannibalistically inclined. No accredited ethnographer has ever received a direct report of encounter with werewolves or demons, but the haunting fear is present among the people. There is always an old man who lives in the next valley who has definite knowledge of them, and there are bocors who are "well known" to be able to give this vile power of lycanthropy to people. A person particularly afraid of werewolves will wear a special garde to ward off this evil.

754 From Africa comes the belief in the *baka*, an evil spirit who has a
776 family resemblance to former Christian notions of the devil. The *baka* will make a bargain with a man, giving him some special power or greatly desired boon in return for the life of a member of his family. The bargain seems always to be cumulative, so that the mortal is never out of debt. When first one member of a family dies, and then a second and a third, the family is sure to consult a houngan in order to discover whether such an engagement exists. The knowledge apparently does little good, for the *baka* is always there at the appointed hour, mowing down one member after another until finally the bargainer himself is killed. One might wonder, since it is

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So it had been with the subject peoples of the island ever since its discovery. The Spaniards introduced a wide variety of European diseases to Española (an epidemic of smallpox in 1500 was estimated to have killed 200,000 Indians in the island) which did not disappear as the Indians gave way to Negroes. Three centuries of the slave trade brought blacks from many parts of Africa, and with them most of the deadliest plagues of that continent. During the flourishing days of French control over Saint-Domingue, Negro slaves were afflicted by a wide variety of diseases, the commonest being yaws, tetanus, intestinal worms, malaria, leprosy, smallpox, and scrofula, although others were certainly not absent. Only to yellow fever, probably brought with them from Africa, did the blacks seem to develop a certain immunity. Most plantations had a doctor in attendance, but medical skill during the eighteenth century was not advanced enough to cope successfully with scourges whose cause was then unknown.

After freedom there were fewer doctors than ever, less sanitation, and a worse diet. When a person was ill, his one alternative to suffering the disease to take its course was to consult the Vodun priest, for the commonly accepted explanation of disease was a spiritual one. If God (that is, the Christian God) had sent the illness, nothing could be done except to bear it, for God's will was unalterable; if it were the result of magic worked by some enemy, the identity of that enemy and the magical means used must be ferreted out so that countermagic might be employed. Vodun practitioners were, indeed, quite as important in their rôle of healing as in performing strictly religious rites. In the course of their efforts to cure disease they often stumbled upon homely but effective cures; no doubt also the mental effect of the patient's faith sometimes helped him to recover, even when the medicines administered had no specific value.

The "triple threat" to Haitian health is the morbid group: malaria, hookworm, and yaws. The first two are familiar enough in parts of the United States, and require only short comment. For centuries malaria has sapped the vitality of people in southern lands, giving them a reputation for indolence which is not wholly deserved. Haitian peasants were during the entire nineteenth century accused of laziness; when a strapping man lay all day in the shade of a tree, it was logical enough for a white visitor to suppose that he was willfully loafing. The critics might have been more temperate if they had known what it was to be perpetually full of malaria, with a body

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